

FAR WEST

DEVELOPMENT AREA

Department of Development and Planning



City of Chicago, Richard J. Daley, Mayor

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Far West Development Area

City of Chicago, Richard J. Daley, Mayor

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PURPOSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AREA REPORTS

The Development Area reports have been prepared to inform Chicago citizens of the meaning of the *Comprehensive Plan's* recommendations for each area of the city, to aid in the exchange of information about community needs between citizens and government that is necessary to the development of a cooperative planning process, and to facilitate the coordination of plans and programs for community improvements. There are 16 Development Areas, covering the entire city, each with a population of 150,000 to 300,000 people and with a land area of 6 to 20 square miles.

The Development Area reports suggest land use changes, residential and industrial improvements, transportation improvements and community facilities and social programs needed to achieve the goals of the *Comprehensive Plan* in each area. The reports are intended to stimulate community discussion of issues, problems, and solutions. This discussion will lead to formulation of a planning framework for each area to be used by government and citizens for scheduling and co-ordinating programs and community improvements.

The various kinds of projects that the city undertakes need to be co-ordinated if they are to produce maximum benefits for the communities they serve. Experience has demonstrated that Chicago is too large to deal with as a whole in co-ordinating and scheduling specific projects. Thus, the Development Areas represent a very practical means of focusing the planning process on localized needs and conditions while remaining within the context of city-wide *Comprehensive Plan* policies and goals.

The recommendations in the Development Area reports are ideas and suggestions for consideration. They do not represent final plans for the areas, nor do they cover all issues. The reports recognize that not all planning problems have clear or immediate solutions and in some cases, questions are raised in the expectation that the best solution will evolve through community discussion.

The Review Process

Four steps will be followed in reviewing and revising the Development Area reports:

- Each Development Area report will be distributed to civic organizations and other private groups, both within the local area and city-wide.

- Representatives of City Government will meet with groups and individuals in each area to discuss the report. Findings will be modified, other ideas sought, and approaches to resolving issues will be explored.

- Appropriate revisions in the proposals will then be made, which will result in a planning framework for the Development Area. After public discussion, the planning framework would be adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission as a policy guide in reviewing projects and programs for the area.

- Using the planning framework as a guide the Department of Development and Planning will work with other agencies to modify and co-ordinate programs and projects to meet the area's critical needs and to achieve local objectives.

Chicago is constantly changing. Therefore, from time to time, each planning framework will be reviewed and adjusted or amended to reflect new needs or changes in objectives as they are identified in the continuing process of planning.

From Plans to Action

In recent years new transportation facilities, urban renewal, and other public and private developments have greatly improved the city's appearance and livability, and the opportunities and capabilities of its people. Still greater effort and further improvement will be necessary if Chicago is to meet its commitment to the strategic objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*. In the coming years sections of the city must be rebuilt or rehabilitated to meet the rising expectations for living standards of all its people. New ways must be found for meeting social concerns, for strengthening capabilities and for broadening opportunities. Achieving the kind of city envisioned in the *Comprehensive Plan* will call for the ideas, widespread support, and involvement of all of the people of Chicago.

FAR WEST DEVELOPMENT AREA

The Far West Development Area is an irregularly shaped section in the northwestern part of the city, bounded generally by Addison Street and Irving Park Road on the north, Pulaski Road and Cicero Avenue on the east, Roosevelt Road and Kinzie Street on the south, and the city limits on the west. This 18.5 square mile area includes all or most of the traditional community areas of Montclare, Dunning, Belmont Cragin, Austin, and Hermosa. Small parts of Portage Park, Irving Park, Avondale, Logan Square, and Humboldt Park are also included.

Originally settled by English, German, and Scandinavian farmers, these communities gained population with the coming of the railroads, the building of nearby factories, and the establishment of parks. Attracted by inexpensive land and nearby work, the early population concentrated near the Milwaukee, Lake, and Whiskey Point (Grand Avenue) plank roads, and near railroad, and later Lake Street elevated stations. Dunning, Belmont Cragin, and Austin also had residential clusters near the County Infirmary (now Chicago State Hospital and Charles F. Read Zone Center), the Whiskey Point trading post near the present intersection of Grand and Armitage avenues, and the town of Austin, situated between Washington and Augusta boulevards, Cicero Avenue and Austin Boulevard, at the center of which Austin Town Hall is still located.

The Far West Development Area is today a low to medium density residential community, with important industrial belts running through it along the railroad lines. Housing conditions vary, and housing types range from a mixture of older large apartments, two and three story walk-ups, and single-family homes in the southern and eastern sections, to an almost solidly single-family development on the northern and western edges.

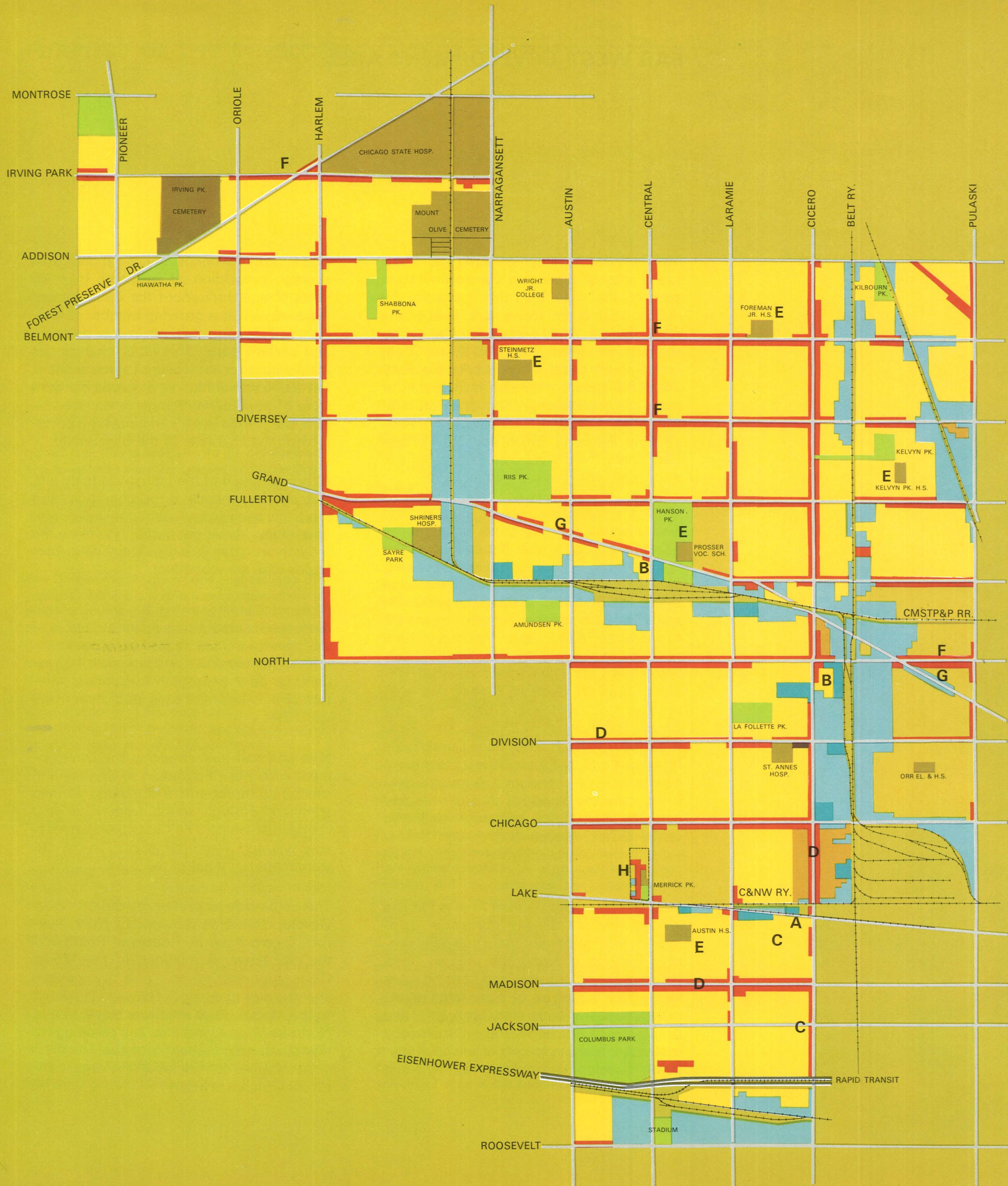
Social program needs reflect a higher than average proportion of residents over 65 years of age throughout the Development Area, as well as a growing number of families with young children in the southern and eastern parts. This latter change has resulted in over-crowding of some schools. Several communities in the Area are in a state of population change where schools form the pivotal point in maintaining or improving the character of the community.

Although much of the industry is fairly old, it is still in generally good condition, and there has been some recent construction of new plants. In some cases, however, the industry intrudes into residential neighborhoods with adverse effect.

Most retail stores serving the Development Area are located along major streets, and are generally characterized by older structures in fair condition, inadequate off-street parking, poor pedestrian circulation, mixture of non-business uses, and often many vacancies.









Mile and half-mile streets in the Development Area need upgrading to primary and secondary thoroughfare standards, to help eliminate through traffic from local and residential streets. The Crosstown Expressway will add a new dimension to the development potential of the Area.

The southeastern section of the Far West Development Area, bounded by North Avenue, Cicero Avenue, Roosevelt Road, and the city limits, is included in the Model Cities program as an "area for general analysis and planning." This area is related to the Model Cities intensive study area in North Lawndale, and thus any planning for this southeastern section of the Far West must take into consideration the larger context of which it is a part.



Planning Framework

Characteristics Far West Development Area

| | |
|--|---|
| Residence in Good Condition |  |
| Residence in Need of Some Improvement |  |
| Residence in Need of Major Repair |  |
| Business Concentration |  |
| Industry in Good Condition |  |
| Industry in Need of Some Improvement |  |
| Park |  |
| Institution |  |
| A Elevated Structure a Blighting Influence | |
| B Mixed Residential and Industrial Land Use | |
| C Adequate Housing with Some Environmental Problems | |
| D Obsolete Commercial | |
| E Overcrowded High School | |
| F Major Commercial Concentration | |
| G Diagonal Street | |
| H Urban Renewal Project | |

Objectives

The proposals of the *Comprehensive Plan of Chicago* are designed to achieve two basic human objectives: individual capability to act, assured by essential standards of the physical and social environment; and individual opportunity for variety, range of choice, and personal advancement. Within this framework, the planning objectives for the Far West Development Area are:

1. Maintain residential areas of high quality, and increase the supply of standard housing available on a basis of full and equal opportunity for all residents, through maintenance and conservation programs.
2. Increase public and private programs of mental health services, family counseling, inter-group relations, day care, services to the elderly, and activities for youth.
3. Assure educational opportunities of high quality for all residents, through programs emphasizing community involvement, pre-school classes, and continuing adult education to enable all citizens to develop their capabilities and to fulfill the responsibilities of living in a democracy. School site expansions, building renovations, additions, and replacements, and library improvements will be important supports to necessary and desirable program innovations.

4. Support the attractiveness of residential areas and provide opportunities for meaningful use of leisure time, through a large increase in the present amount of park land, expanded indoor cultural and recreational facilities, and increased emphasis on beautification.

5. Enlist community support for both crime and fire prevention programs, and provide modernized police and fire department facilities where needed.

6. Provide more attractive commercial facilities by consolidating business strips into shopping and special service centers.

7. Encourage industry to concentrate within the major industrial belts, with emphasis on reducing adverse industrial effects on residential areas through enforcement of parking requirements, screening provisions, and effective performance standards for noise, odor, and smoke emissions, and vibrations.

8. Improve Area accessibility through widening of mile streets, construction of a crosstown expressway and associated public transportation, and removal of the blighting influence of the Lake Street elevated structure. Routine services such as street repair and sewer maintenance should be provided as needed.

Population Characteristics

The history of population growth in the Far West Development Area generally paralleled the city's expansion to the west and northwest in the 1920's. In most of the Area, population growth reached a peak about 1930. After this began a population decline for all the Far West community areas except Dunning and Montclare, but 1966 population estimates show a decrease from 1960 in these two communities as well.

The 1960 population of 291,000 represented eight per cent of the city total and over nine per cent of all Chicago families. These families tended to be at later stages of the life cycle, with smaller than city-wide proportions of children under 18, and larger proportions of adults over 65. The 1960 population was almost entirely white with a high proportion of first and second generation people of foreign extraction. In 1960, almost half of the Development Area's population was of foreign stock, compared to about one-third of the city as a whole. In most parts of the area the population was primarily of German, Polish, and Italian background. In Austin there were Irish as well.

The last Census generally showed less population mobility during 1955-60, in the Far West than in the city as a whole. There have been population shifts since 1960, however. Among the newcomers to the area since 1960 have been a number of young Negro and Puerto Rican families in southeast Austin and the southern part of Humboldt Park. Board of Education student

headcounts indicate recent population trends: at the May and Spencer elementary schools in Austin the 1966 pupil enrollment of 57% and 53% Negro increased to 84% and 82% Negro in 1967. These schools have also recently become overcrowded. Decennial Census figures from 1930 to 1960 show a steadily increasing population over 65 years of age, a steadily decreasing percentage of those 20 to 44 years old, and only slight fluctuation in the under 19 age group throughout the Development Area. Recent school over-crowding indicates that there has been an increase of young families in southeast Austin since 1960. Schools in the central and northern sections of the area have empty classrooms. This may be taken as an indication that age trends noted for 1930 to 1960 are continuing in these sections.

In 1960, most parts of the Development Area had family incomes at or above the city median. Education and occupational levels varied. The neighborhoods west of Narragansett Avenue had the highest income levels in the Development Area, in some cases as much as \$3200 above the 1960 Chicago average. Education and proportion of white-collar workers, however, were generally below average for the city, as they were in all the rest of the area except Austin. Austin had a higher than city-wide median number of school years completed, and a higher proportion of male white-collar workers. The percentage of the adult population attending four or more years of college was about average for Chicago.

Residence

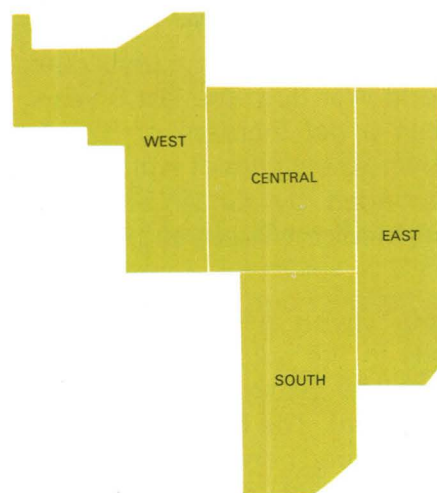
In 1960, the Far West Development Area housed over 291,000 people in 102,000 housing units, of which seven per cent were considered deficient.¹ More than half of the units were owner occupied compared to one-third of the units in all of Chicago, and over ten per cent had been built since 1950. The majority of dwelling units had five rooms or more.

Housing types in the Far West range from a mixture of older large apartments, two and three story walk-ups, and single family homes in the southern and eastern sections, to an almost uniformly single family development on the northern and western edges. For discussion purposes four residential sub-areas have been identified within the Development Area. These sub-areas are based on housing type and condition, owner occupancy rates, and public program boundaries:

- A West Sub-Area, bounded by Narragansett Avenue on the east, and by the city limits on the south, west, and north;
- A Central Sub-Area, bound on the east by Cicero Avenue, on the south by North Avenue, on the west by Narragansett, and on the north by Addison Street;
- An East Sub-Area, bounded by the Development Area boundaries on the north, east, and south, and by Cicero Avenue on the west.

¹Deficient housing units include the following census categories: the sound units lacking some or all plumbing facilities, all deteriorating and dilapidated units.

- A South Sub-Area, bounded on the north by North Avenue, on the east by Cicero Avenue, and on the south and west by the city limits.



West Sub-Area

Although early settlers arrived in the west sub-area as early as 1833, real growth did not occur until the period 1910 to 1930. Today, only scattered vacant lots are found. The dominant housing type remains the single family home.

In 1960, 56,000 people lived in 17,000 housing units in this sub-area. Over 80 per cent of the units were owner occupied. Units were slightly larger than average for the city, and had proportionately higher average valuations. Only seven per cent, compared to 23 per cent city-wide, were considered deficient in 1960.

In this sub-area there were three concentrations of housing that were considered more than 10 per cent deficient: (1) the area bounded by Addison, Oriole, Belmont, and Pueblo, (2) the area between Belmont and Diversey, Narragansett, and the Milwaukee railroad, and (3) the area of predominantly frame houses bounded by Fullerton, Narragansett, Armitage and the industrial concentration on the west. In each of these areas preventive action through intensified code enforcement can combat the deterioration that often accompanies aging of the housing stock.

Central Sub-Area

The central sub-area was first settled in the 1870's and 1880's when railroad lines were extended through the area. Residential maturity was reached by 1930, and little population growth has occurred since then. The sub-area consists mainly of single family

homes and two-flats with a few apartment buildings. Home values here are near the city median, and the rate of owner occupancy is well above city average. This sub-area of the Far West was a relatively stable area in the five years preceding the 1960 Census, with only 38 per cent of the population over 5 years of age having moved in that period.

The 87,000 people living in this sub-area in 1960 were housed in 29,000 units, of which only 3.6 per cent were considered deficient. More than half were owner occupied. Eighty-eight per cent of the units existing in 1960 were built before 1940. Records of construction permits from the Department of Buildings show that new construction accounted for a net increase of over 500 units in the last five years.

Although the housing in this sub-area is pri-

marily in good condition, there are concentrations of dwellings showing some deterioration in the area bounded by Fullerton, Laramie, Grand, and Long avenues, next to Hanson Park. In 1960, about 13 per cent of the units in this area were deficient. Housing here was generally older than in the rest of the Far West Development Area, as 97 per cent of the units were constructed before 1940. Intensified code enforcement can help to maintain this area of moderate cost housing. Family incomes tended to be below those in other parts of the Development Area, and just below the city median.

East Sub-Area

In 1960, the east sub-area contained 20,350 housing units, of which 11 per cent were considered deficient. Almost 96 per cent of all housing units in this sub-area were constructed prior to 1940.



Housing types include older large apartments, walk-ups, small frame houses, bungalows, and large single-family homes.

The northern section of this sub-area was settled first in the 1870's. It's major growth period was 1910 to 1930. With the exception of the small pocket of deficient housing near Diversey and Pulaski, the housing here is well maintained. There has been relatively little new construction here since 1940.

The southern half of the sub-area was also first settled around 1870, but the period of major residential growth occurred from 1890 to 1915. The housing stock today is generally in need of some repair, primarily due to structural aging. Most of the dwelling units are single-family or two-flat buildings, and 39 per cent are owner occupied. The only substantial new post-1960 construction in this part of the area has taken place between Armitage Avenue and the Milwaukee Road rail line, Pulaski Road and the Belt Line Railroad. This small area had a

net increase of 113 housing units in the last five years.

The 43 per cent owner occupancy rate in the east sub-area was significantly higher than the city-wide average of 33 per cent. There seems to be an opportunity here to maintain residential structures at a level sufficient to forestall deterioration. There were three pockets of deficient housing within the sub-area in 1960: (1) the small zone completely surrounded by industry south of Diversey at Pulaski; (2) the zone bounded by Cicero, Grand, Kilpatrick, and Lemoyne; and (3) the zone bounded by Cicero, Chicago, Kenton, and Kinzie. These three concentrations contain over 29 per cent of the sub-area's deficient housing. The southern half of the east sub-area will require somewhat greater effort in maintenance and code enforcement than will

the northern half. This is due to both the age and the present condition of the structures.

South Sub-Area

The south sub-area contains most of the community of Austin. It was settled in the 1870's and 1880's and grew swiftly until the 1930's. In 1960, 95 per cent of the 35,420 existing residential units dated from pre-World War II. In the last 5 years, there has been a net increase of 527 housing units, over 80 per cent of which were in the area bounded by Kinzie Street, Laramie Avenue, Madison Street, and Austin Boulevard.

In 1960, seven per cent of all housing units in the south sub-area were deficient, still far below the city-wide average of 23 per cent. The bulk of these deficient units were found between Austin Boulevard and Laramie Avenue, north of Lake Street to Chicago Avenue, and between Laramie and Cicero, south of Lake Street to Harrison.

Owner occupied dwelling units comprise 30 per cent of the total here, slightly below the city-wide average. This percentage, the age of residential structures, and the changing composition of the population are the primary factors influencing the future of this community. Code enforcement programs could be applied to bring up the general quality where deficient housing is present. Areas with intense problems should be studied to determine appropriate programming actions. Both public and private initiative conservation programs should be encouraged.

The Department of Urban Renewal is currently engaged in the study of a 30-acre area bounded by Waller Avenue, Huron Street, Central Avenue, and Lake Street. This predominantly residential area contains 555 housing units. It is expected that 5 to 10 acres will be defined as an urban renewal project. Such an area could be redeveloped with moderately priced, privately built low-rise residential structures and related uses.

The city's Neighborhood Service Program provides an intensive program of rehabilitation assistance and code enforcement services in Austin, within the area bounded by Chicago Avenue, the Belt Line Railroad, Eisenhower Expressway, Central Avenue, Adams Street, Austin Boulevard, and Kinzie Street. It is suggested that program boundaries be extended along Chicago Avenue



westward to Austin Boulevard, in order to include the one-half square mile of housing shown in need of improvement on the characteristics map.

The Chicago Dwellings Association is also contributing to rehabilitation efforts in Austin, with three buildings in receivership at present, and other opportunities under study.

Social Programs

The Far West Development Area does not exhibit social program needs to the extent and depth which give priority to other areas of the city. Changes in population composition in some parts of the area and age trends in other parts have created demands for new services and for changes in the quality and quantity of existing services.

Various public services are available in the Development Area through local offices of federal, state, and city agencies. The *Social Services Directory* of the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago lists seven private agencies in the Far West, some of which have more than one facility in the Area. Several of these institutions serve neighborhoods beyond the Development Area boundaries, and similarly, there are agencies in adjacent areas which serve Far West residents.

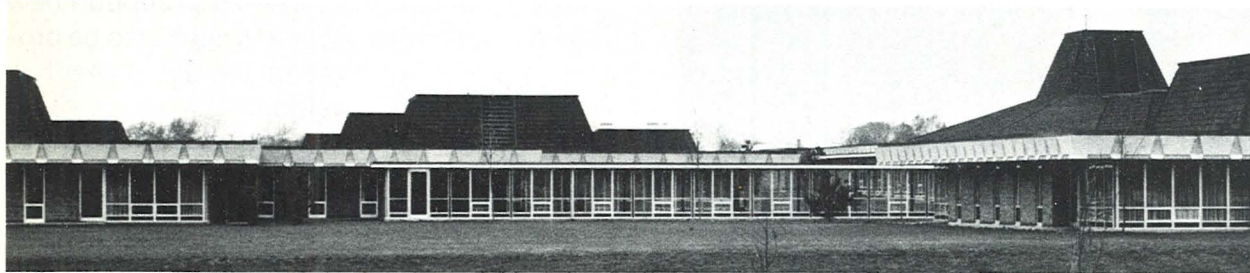
A recent study by the Welfare Council has emphasized the need for day care, especially for children under three. The 24 day care centers in the Far West had a total capacity of 276 children in 1966, less than ten per cent of the estimated 3500 children in need. Of this number, 1600 lived in Austin where day care capacity was only 68. The continuing influx of young families into this area suggests that the estimate of day care need should be raised. Therefore, a priority project should be the provision of day care services throughout the Far West Development Area.

More recreational facilities and social centers for young people are needed. Family and youth counseling services should also be increased. The Development Area ranked low to average in the city in juvenile crimes committed for the period 1962-1965. From 1962 to 1965, there were moderate increases in juvenile delinquency in some parts of the Development Area.

The Commission on Youth Welfare has two community units operating in the Far West Development Area. Several community groups now work to combat delinquency. More programs of this sort should be established throughout the Development Area, especially in Austin, Dunning and Hermosa. Youth counseling services sponsored by community and civic organizations are also needed. Volunteers would work with teenagers referred to such services by police. Programs of this type, locally sponsored and staffed, can be very



Since 1960, there has been an increase in families with young children in the southeast part of the area.



Charles F. Read Zone Center (shown) and Chicago State Hospital provide public mental health services in a broad metropolitan scope.

effective and should be given community-wide support.

One of the city's greatest unused assets is the potential for useful civic contributions present in its steadily growing number of people aged 65 and over. This group is a higher proportion of the Far West Development Area population than of the city as a whole, and is increasing. A careful and thorough study of the needs and desires of the elderly should be made, especially in the fields of medical, recreational, and housing programs. At present, there is no public housing for the elderly in the Development Area.

Throughout the Far West there are about fifteen senior citizen activity groups sponsored by churches, the Chicago Park District, and the YMCA's. Concerted efforts should be made to use the talents of these people on a paid or volunteer basis, perhaps working with children or adolescents. At present, the Foster Grandparents Program, sponsored by the Commission on Senior Citizens, works with institutionalized youngsters at Chicago State Hospital.

In achieving improvement of the quality of life for all residents of the area, young and old, coordination of community organizations is important. Representative citizens' organizations can enable a community to participate more effectively in determining the direction of its own development. Three relatively large, and several smaller community groups exist in the Far West. In this Development Area, as in other parts of the city, there is a need for increased human relations programs that will encourage the development of inter-group understanding.

The *Comprehensive Plan* considers the Far West Development Area a relatively low priority area for provision of public health care services. This means that while the city's public health services need to be expanded in every part of the city, this need is considered less urgent in this area.

General inpatient care facilities now available are located in two hospitals, one in Austin, one at the far northeast corner of the Development Area. There are two major public mental health facilities in the Far West Development Area—Chicago State Hospital and the Charles Read Zone Center.

Education

In 1967, 32,000 students attended public elementary and high schools in the Far West Development Area. An additional 14,000 students attended parochial elementary schools. Although figures are not available on an area basis, it is estimated that 5000 students in the Development Area attend parochial high schools.

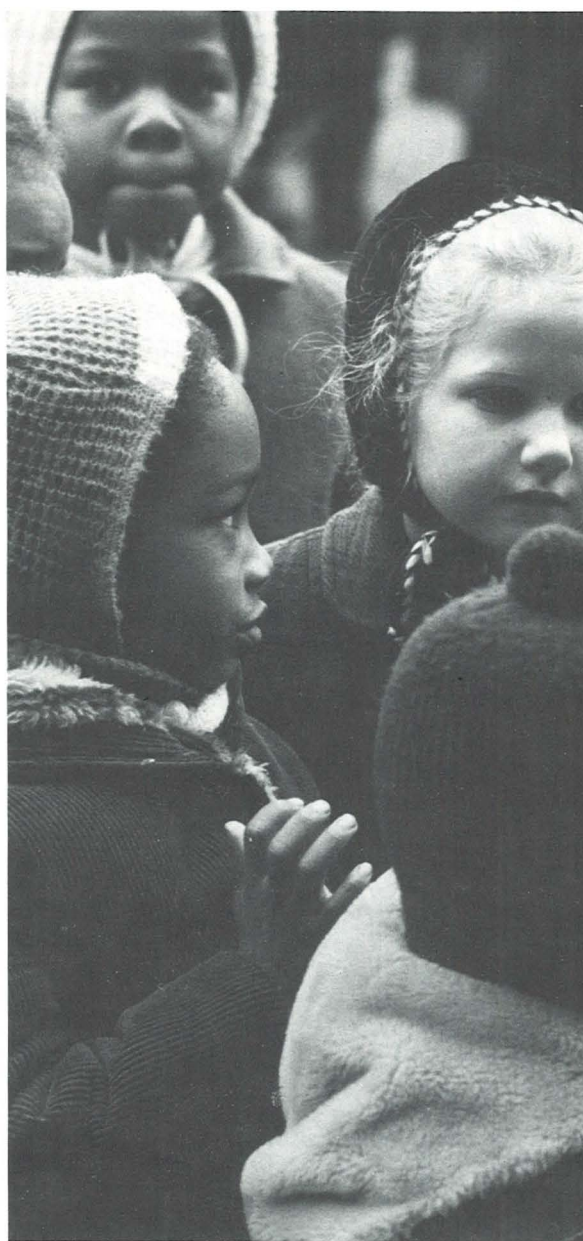
In the two years from 1965 to 1967, public elementary school enrollment rose by almost 15 per cent. Most schools in the Development Area experienced only minor enrollment changes — increases or decreases of one or two per cent. In the southeastern part of the Development Area, two schools, Spencer and May, had enrollment increases of 50 per cent or more. The building of additions at May and Spencer schools and the transfer of seventh and eighth grade students from Spencer to a new upper-grade center at the Hay School have only partly alleviated overcrowding.

Racial integration in the schools is an issue of great concern for the people of the Far West Development Area. Several communities in this Development Area are in a state of population change, where schools form the pivotal point in maintaining or improving the character of the community. The historical patterns of resegregation experienced in many communities have been disadvantageous for all of the people concerned. Whether the school is viewed in the broad context of a major community institution or in the narrower context of the specific task of education, it remains that patterns of social isolation seriously limit the educational process.

One objective in attempting to combat racial and social isolation in the school system is an increase in the achievement level of disadvantaged students, of whom a disproportionate number are members of minority groups. Perhaps an even more important objective is the expansion of democratic attitudes contributing to the growth and maturity of all students. As has been stated in a national study, "Racial isolation in the schools also fosters attitudes and behavior that perpetuate isolation in other areas of American life".²

An approach to this issue in the Far West Development Area has now been under-

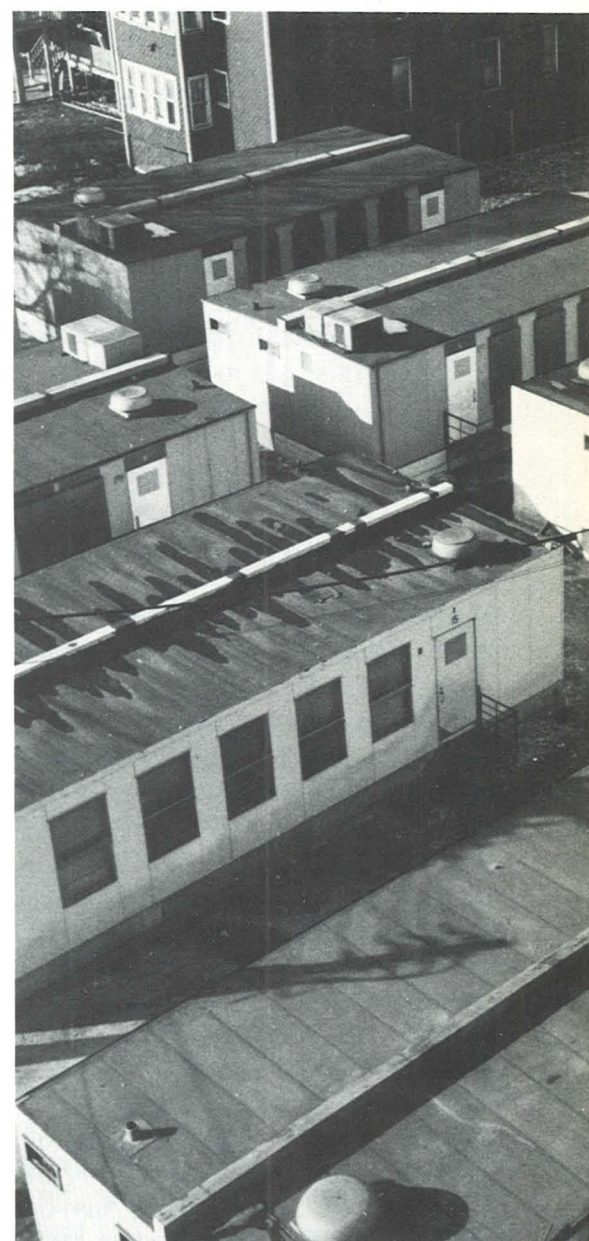
taken by the Board of Education. A voluntary busing program has been instituted permitting a number of students from the overcrowded May and Spencer schools, in an area that is approaching resegregation, to attend less crowded and heretofore all-white schools in the northwest part of the Development Area. A second program,



The reduction of social isolation in the public schools will expand democratic attitudes contributing to the growth and maturity of all students.

Project Wingspread, will permit the exchange of Chicago and suburban students. A federal grant has been received by the Board of Education to assist this program through 1969. A summer session at Austin High School and a fall program at Hay Upper Grade Center are included. The objective of the program is to broaden students' understanding of the metropolitan community through study of the forces that bind the city and suburban areas together.

As this special community focus is placed on the schools it becomes more important than ever to insure that the quality of the programs offered is held at the highest possible level throughout the Development Area. Many special programs will be needed to insure that different needs are met.



The Board of Education is currently developing policies to determine in what manner much needed classroom space should be provided.

The school facilities needed to support new and imaginative programs must also be provided. Twenty-three of the 27 elementary schools in the Development Area are operating at, or above, enrollments of 33 pupils per classroom. Only one school has been built in the last thirty years, and four were built more than seventy years ago. Most schools are in need of additional playground space.

² United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools*. Vol. 1, p. 110.

Recreation

One vocational and five general high schools are located in the Far West Development Area. In all but Orr High School, the enrollments range from 10 per cent to 50 percent over rated capacity. Existing facilities are from 35 to 50 years old, and most are in need of modernization and expansion of outdoor facilities. Additional classroom capacity is needed. The Board of Education is currently developing policies that will determine in what manner this space will be provided.

Wright Junior College is located in the Far West Development Area. There is a parking problem in the residential areas that surround the college. The long range planning of the Chicago City College Board includes the proposal that this college be moved nearer the intersection of the Crosstown and Kennedy corridors of high accessibility.

The *Comprehensive Plan* envisions a four year university located at the intersection of the Eisenhower and Crosstown corridors immediately east of this Development Area in the Mid-West Development Area.

Libraries

The Chicago Public Library recommends that all residents of Chicago have access to a library branch within a one mile radius of their homes. Service in the Far West Development Area presently consists of one library-owned branch, five branches in rented spaces, and two traveling branch stops. A large proportion of the people in the Development Area do not have adequate library service at present. The fifteen year library improvement program will provide adequate service for all residential areas. In the Far West in 1968 a new branch will be built serving the Portage Park area. Presently a long-range library facilities study is underway. This study will detail the needs of the Area and of the city.

The Far West Development Area has approximately 330 acres of park land. In addition, the northwest corner of the area is adjacent to forest preserves. Sixty per cent of the Development Area's total recreational acreage is located in two parks, Columbus and Riis, with another 11 per cent in six additional parks. The remainder of the Park District land is in small playgrounds and tot lots. Although some neighborhoods are well served, the Development Area as a whole has approximately 1.2 acres of park space for every 1000 persons, which is below the minimum target of two acres of park land per 1000 residents recommended in the *Comprehensive Plan*. An emphasis on the quality of parks—their design, equipment, maintenance, personnel, and variety of programs—is as important as the number and size of parks.

The greatest needs for more recreational space are found in two areas, one bounded by North Avenue, Austin Boulevard, Lake Street, and Pulaski Road, and the other the portion of the Development Area north of Diversey Avenue. Priority should be given to these large areas for new park land. Whenever possible, the new park land should be located adjacent to schools which have a deficiency in play space. By doing this it may be possible for the Park District to use portions of the school buildings for recreation programs when they are not being used by the Board of Education.

In the last ten years little park land has been added in this Development Area. In 1967, two new fieldhouses were scheduled, one in Amundsen Park, the other in Hiawatha Park. Fourteen parks were scheduled for



Riis Park illustrates the benefits of an increased emphasis on the quality of park design, equipment, maintenance, and programs.

Public Safety and Health

improvements such as spray pools, lighting, and paved play areas.

Many of the parks are in need of increased maintenance and imaginative landscaping to make them more usable and keyed to the desires of the residents of the community. One location where this need is evident is Hanson Park at Central and Fullerton Avenues. At the present time this is just a large field containing a stadium, an elementary school, and a high school. Landscaping and the provision of facilities for active sports would be an improvement. Rockne Stadium presently serves the southern part of the Far West Development Area. Its location and single purpose design detract from its usefulness to the community.

There is in the Far West Development Area a major opportunity area that could be used for recreational purposes. The seventy-acre clay pit at Narragansett and Fullerton avenues could be developed as a regional park, taking advantage of its existing sloping topography. Such a park could be used for hiking and picnics in the summer and tobogganing and sledding in the winter.



The 70-acre clay pit at Narragansett and Fullerton avenues could be developed as a regional park, taking advantage of its existing sloping topography.

In recent years public agencies in Chicago have been called upon to play more important and positive roles in a growing range of safety and health fields. The programs of environmental health and safety agencies have been expanded to include positive social and educational services, as well as crime, fire, and disease prevention. These agencies emphasize the idea that public safety and health are not the responsibility of government alone and have therefore initiated programs to encourage citizen support and involvement.

In the field of environmental health, full community cooperation is essential if programs are to have a maximum effect. The city's intensified air pollution abatement program will need particular support from local industry and Far West Development Area residents as sulphur dioxide and particulates from fuel burning are major pollutants. As housing and industry is rebuilt or rehabilitated, heating equipment which produces a minimum of air pollution should be installed. Carbon monoxide from cars, trucks, and buses is not a serious problem in the Far West, but does affect neighborhoods in the southern and eastern parts of the area. The 1967-71 Joint Capital Im-

provements Program includes several improvements such as sewer lines and water mains, within the Far West Development Area. Also scheduled is a new incinerator to be located within the Chicago and Northwestern yards, which will serve the entire northwest side of the city.

1967 crime rates had risen over the 1966 figures throughout the area, whereas in 1966 they had risen in Austin and fallen in the northwest part of the area. A new Police Department Area headquarters and district station is planned for a location in the northeast part of the Development Area. Construction will begin in 1969-70. Crime prevention demands citizen cooperation, both in crime reporting, as in Operation Crime Stop, and through positive actions designed to alleviate the basic causes of crime. Recreation programs and increased employment opportunities after school hours and during vacations would be constructive approaches to reducing the incidence of illegal activities.

A new fire station has recently been completed at 5258 W. Grand Avenue, and a second firehouse is scheduled to be built in 1968 at 1713 N. Springfield Avenue, just outside the Development Area.



A system of shopping centers meeting modern standards is proposed to consolidate and strengthen existing businesses, attract new firms, and improve service to the people of the Development Area.



Opportunities for planned industrial districts exist where railroad yards may be reduced in size or eliminated.

Business

Business uses in the Far West Development Area generally follow the city-wide pattern of commercial strips along the major streets, with concentrations at many major intersections. These business uses are generally characterized by older structures in fair condition, inadequate off-street parking, poor pedestrian circulation, mixture of non-business uses, and often many vacancies.

The Development Area is served by five major shopping concentrations, located at Belmont and Central Avenues, Harlem and North Avenues, Grand and Harlem Avenues, Harlem and Fullerton Avenues, and at Pulaski Road and North Avenue. In recent years three of these concentrations have had a decline in the volume of business, and an increase in the rate of vacancy. It appears that the main reason for this has been the attraction of modern shopping centers. In order to continue to attract business to the established centers within the city improvements will be required for the maintenance of attractiveness and convenience. These objectives can be aided by the

removal of unused and marginal commercial structures along the major streets. In addition, almost all of the present shopping concentrations could benefit from the provision of adequate off-street parking, concentrations of shops on one corner of an intersection in order to eliminate the need for crossing a major street, or some system of pedestrian overpass.

The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends a new regional shopping facility for the intersection of the Eisenhower Expressway and the proposed Crosstown Expressway. This site would be desirable because of its high level of accessibility from large portions of the city and suburbs via the expressways and transit. In addition to the regional center, the *Comprehensive Plan* indicates the need for three special service districts along Cicero Avenue. These districts would provide space for special types of business functions that do not require locations in business centers, but benefit from proximity to each other, such as automobile sales facilities.

Industry

Industry in the Far West Area has generally followed a linear pattern along the railroads. All of the concentrations are narrow—four blocks at the widest points. The largest concentration is the Cragin Industrial District which is located on both sides of the Belt Line Railroad between Lake Street and Fullerton Avenue. The structures were almost all built after 1915 with many built during the thirties and relatively few in the last ten years. About 75 per cent of the structures are one-story buildings. A relatively large number of the industrial plants create noise and fumes which detract from the working environment and the adjacent residential communities. There is a small enclave of commercial uses and residence in need of major repair around North and Cicero Avenues which might eventually be replaced with industry.

At the southern end of this industrial district is a Chicago and North Western Railroad yard. In recent years the eastern and northern edges of the yard have been redeveloped for industry. When the railroad relocates yard functions the remainder of the tract should be redeveloped as a planned industrial district.

The second largest industrial concentration in the Far West Development Area is the Galewood Industrial District, located along the Milwaukee Road rail yard between Cicero and Oak Park Avenues, including a section running north along a spur line to Diversey Avenue. In recent years the section of the yards between Austin Boulevard and Oak Park Avenue has been replaced with industry. If the yards are further reduced in size or eliminated, a planned industrial district could be created here. The section west of Narragansett Avenue, north to Diversey Avenue, was built primarily between 1920 and 1950, though there has been some construction since 1950. The area consists almost entirely of plants of over 40,000 square feet of floor space. Four plants in this area employ over 500 employees each. In addition, there is a seventy acre tract of land used for excavation of clay for the manufacture of bricks.

The remainder of the Galewood Industrial District was developed prior to World War II. There have been several new facilities and additions since 1950. Older structures are frequently 2 to 4 stories high and in poor physical condition. The industry in poor

condition should be upgraded wherever possible, and replaced when it is necessary. If new facilities are required, new plants should provide adequate off-street parking and loading docks. There is an enclave of residential and commercial uses within the industrial district, between Cicero, Laramie, and Armitage Avenues and the Milwaukee Road tracks. Industrial expansion could take place within this area.



This industrial building and its surrounding grounds are well maintained, with off-street parking areas screened from view.

The South Austin Industrial District is also located in the area, between the Eisenhower Expressway, Roosevelt Road, Cicero Avenue, and Menard Avenue. This district includes several large new industrial plants and commercial facilities. It appears that most of the plants provide off-street parking and have adequate loading facilities.

The remaining industry in the area is part of the Healy Industrial District. This is located in the northeast corner of the Development Area along the tracks of the Chicago and North Western, and the Milwaukee Road railroads. These bands of industry are quite narrow, varying from about half a block to about two blocks in width. Most of the factories were built in the 1920's with some expansion between 1940 and 1950. There has been little construction since then, however. Many of the older structures are 3 and 4 stories high, while the newer plants are generally one story. Because of the linear character of the industrial area many of the plants are directly adjacent to residential areas. Both the residential and the industrial sections are in good condition, and there is, therefore, little likelihood of the need for substantial change as long as this continues.

Transportation

The *Comprehensive Plan* includes five major elements that form the framework for transportation planning in the Far West Development Area:

1. The construction of the Crosstown Expressway.
2. The provision of express public transit facilities in the Crosstown corridor.
3. The creation of a corridor of high accessibility at Lake Street through street and transit improvements.
4. The effectuation of the major street plan throughout the city.
5. The cooperative reordering of railroad land uses and coordination of commuter rail service with public transit.

Although these planning elements are based in city-wide system needs, there are decisions about each that should be made through the Development Area procedure. The specific design of each improvement can be tailored to best meet conditions and needs in each Development Area.

The Crosstown Expressway is planned as the last major element in the expressway network for Chicago. Preliminary studies have identified the general location of this expressway, and studies are currently underway to determine the specific location and design of the facility. The Crosstown Expressway will represent the newest and most modern approach to expressway design. Every effort is being made to insure the coordination of federal, state and local capabilities so that the result of the Crosstown project will be not only a highly useful expressway, but also a series of community improvements benefiting all of the areas through which the expressway passes. Opportunities for new schools and parks, for consolidation of business strips and industrial concentrations, and for improvement of the residential environment are all being considered. These will be developed through the Development Area procedure as the design study progresses. The inclusion of public rapid transit capacities in the Crosstown corridor will further strengthen the value of this improvement in the communities of the Far West Development Area as access to jobs and to colleges and other major institutions will be greatly improved.



Re-routing of traffic and provision of off-street parking in industrial areas should remove much of the burden from residential neighborhoods.

The base of the major street plan of the *Comprehensive Plan* is the system of streets at one mile intervals across the city. In the Far West Development Area, these streets are: Irving Park Road, Belmont Avenue, Fullerton Avenue, North Avenue, Chicago Avenue, Madison Street, and Roosevelt Road running east-west, and Pulaski Road, Cicero Avenue, Central Avenue, Narragansett Avenue, Harlem Avenue, and Pacific Avenue running north-south. In order to meet high traffic demands directly west of downtown, Lake Street has been added to this system. The function of these major streets is to provide the means for moving traffic throughout the city with minimum intrusion on neighborhood streets. At present, many residential streets are used for through travel. The removal of this traffic will help to solve many problems, the greatest of which is the danger such traffic presents to children. The major street plan will require the improvement of most of the streets involved. This may take the form of widening, or other improvements.

A secondary thoroughfare system will consist of the half-mile streets that lie between the major streets. These streets will be kept continuous wherever possible to act as traffic distributors for the major street system and to strengthen the ability of the Chicago Transit Authority to provide bus service on both the mile and half-mile streets.

Transit

Rapid Transit service will soon be provided in the median of the John F. Kennedy Expressway. The bus system in much of the northern part of the Far West Development Area will be adjusted to insure that this service is made most useful to residents of the northwest side of the city. A major terminal near Milwaukee and Central Avenues will link the bus system with both the Kennedy rapid transit line and the Chicago and Northwestern commuter railroad line.

Rapid transit service in the Congress Expressway and at Lake Street will continue to provide a high level of service in the southern part of the Development Area. The relocation of the Lake Street line to the Northwestern embankment from Laramie

Avenue west is an excellent improvement in all respects. This relocation should be extended further east through the Far West Development Area and into the Midwest Development Area. Improved transit service, the link with the Northwestern commuter line, and the planned improvement of Lake Street will create a corridor of high accessibility that will support other important improvements in the southern part of the Development Area. In addition, the central part of the Development Area is served by the Milwaukee Road commuter line which has five stations between Harlem Avenue and Pulaski Road.

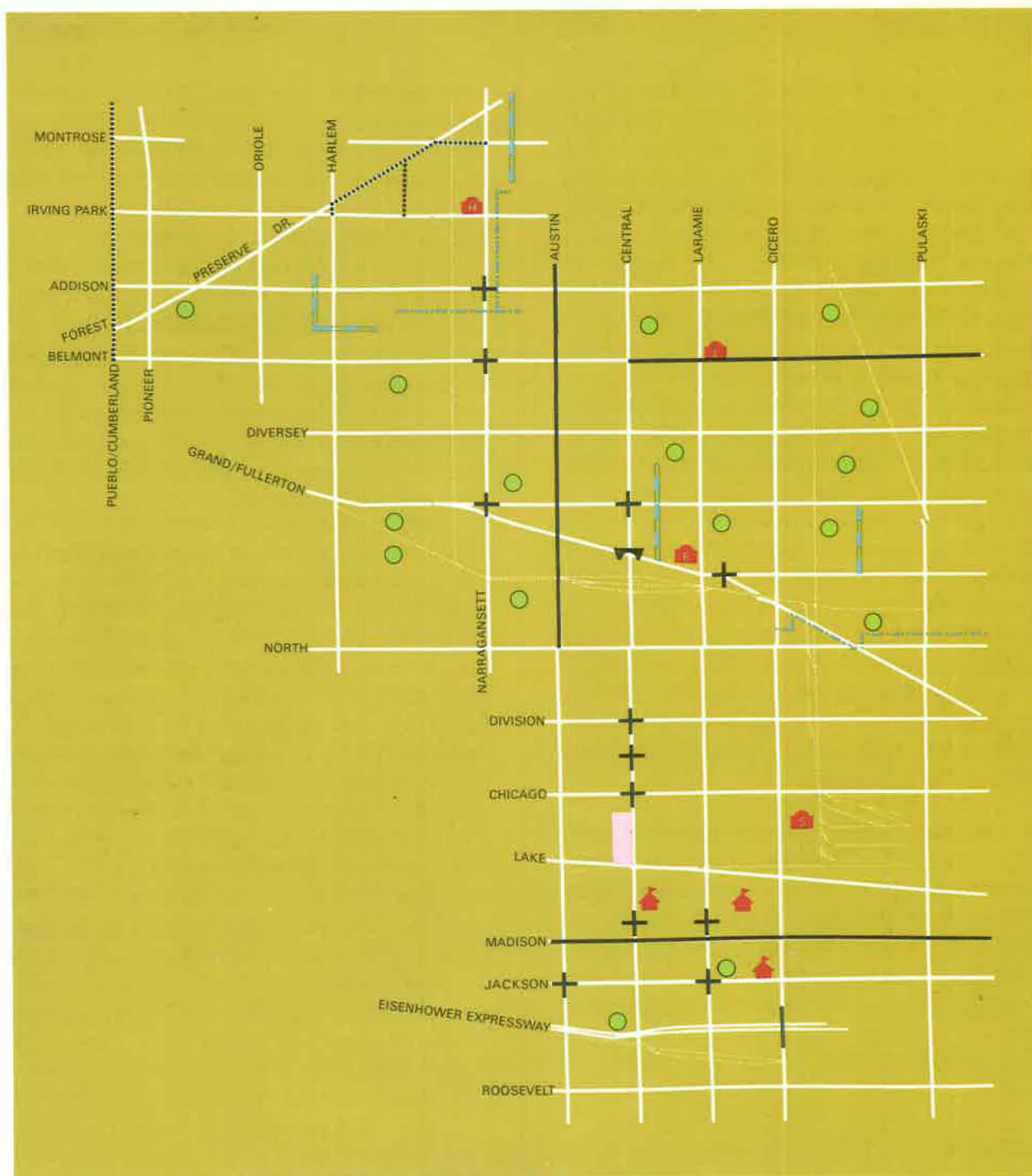
Rail lines and rail yards throughout the city are continually reviewed by both the railroad companies and the city to insure the capability of Chicago's transportation system to move people and goods according to present and future needs. In many cases rail yards can be reduced or eliminated in favor of more productive land uses. Further, it is expected that some rail rights-of-way can eventually be consolidated in ways that will reduce land use conflicts in the city. In the Far West Development Area, railroad changes include the current reduction of the Northwestern yards at the intersection of the Northwestern and Belt railways in favor of industrial development. The principal rail line problem is with the Milwaukee Road crossings at grade to the west of Austin Boulevard. Where at-grade rail crossings exist throughout the city the safety of motorists and pedestrians, and the disruption of street traffic are serious concerns. Such crossings should be redesigned and rebuilt as soon as possible.

Major Capital Improvements in The Far West Development Area

The map illustrates major projects included in The 1967-1971 *Joint Capital Improvements Program* as well as a number of additional projects scheduled since completion of this report. The Capital Improvements Program covers a five year period and is revised annually and submitted to the Chicago Plan Commission for approval. The Plan Commission, under the inter-agency planning referral procedure, also reviews each project prior to construction to insure that projects are in conformity with *The Comprehensive Plan of Chicago*.

Projects identified on the map are at three different stages of development: projects recently completed, projects underway, and projects proposed within the next five years. Some area-wide projects, such as the recently completed comprehensive alley lighting program, are not mapped.

Two major studies currently underway concerning the Far West Development Area are the Department of Urban Renewal's study area in Austin and the design of the Cross-town Expressway. In addition, several public agencies have initiated city-wide development plans which will result in further recommendations for improved public facilities and services in this area.



Street Improvement



Intersection Improvement



Street Lighting



Water Feeder Main



Sewer Improvement



Fire Station (New)



Sanitation Facility (New)



Public Library (New)



Health Facility Improvement



Bridge and Viaduct Improvement



School Improvement



Park Improvement



Community Improvement



Environmental Patterns in Austin

This square mile section of the Far West Development Area was originally a part of the town of Austin. The handsome old Town Hall at Central and Lake, maintained by the Chicago Park District as a recreation center, provides a focal point for other community facilities including a public library, YMCA, churches, schools, and business activities centered around the Lake Street CTA station.

While housing in this area is predominantly sound there are serious signs of deterioration in individual structures, and major environmental problems exist which could lead to further deterioration. Traffic congestion on major streets results in heavy through traffic on some residential streets, particularly Washington Boulevard. Problems of overcrowded schools or inadequate sites, a lack of recreation and open spaces, and obsolete commercial strips, need attention along with continued and strengthened programs of housing improvement. The Neighborhood Service Program, the code enforcement programs of the City Department of Buildings and the contemplated renewal of the six block area north and west of the Town Hall are key steps in the protection and improvement of the residential environment.

Beyond these steps certain long-range changes in the pattern of development in Austin could significantly improve the livability of the area. The two alternative diagrams shown indicate the pattern of development which might occur assuming different degrees of change and rebuilding as well as different standards of public facilities and services. In a sense, these two diagrams could also be considered to represent different points in time.

Alternative A assumes a minimum of residential redevelopment and minimum standards for public facilities as outlined in the improvement sections of the *Comprehensive Plan*. New schools and parks are suggested where most critically needed. Local street patterns are modified to protect residential areas. It is assumed that major streets will be improved as needed to carry through traffic movement. A loosely connected system of pedestrian-ways is suggested to tie together community facilities, recreation and open space, local shopping, and rapid transit stations. The concentra-

tions of shopping facilities into compact, convenient centers at major intersections and near rapid transit stations would not only provide more attractive and convenient commercial services, but would free up land for street improvements and new housing construction.

Alternative B contemplates a more extensive rebuilding of the area combined with a higher standard for public facilities and services. These facilities are tied together by a more closely knit system of walkways. The resulting pattern might accommodate some of the newly emerging concepts of "cultural-educational clusters" being considered by the Board of Education and the City of Chicago. The existing pattern of institutions, transportation access and needs in the Austin area lends itself to this approach.

Existing

Residential

Institutions and Parks

Business

Industry



EXISTING



ALTERNATIVE A



ALTERNATIVE B

SUMMARY

The illustration opposite this summary presents an overview of the major concepts identified through the Development Area process at this stage. Through this device it is possible to see how each of these ideas contributes to the design of the total fabric for the Far West Development Area.

A. The majority of the residential neighborhoods in the Development Area are in good condition, and thus require only continuing attention to maintenance of housing and exterior spaces. The present variety of densities and building types should be maintained in most communities. Higher densities should be encouraged only where transportation improvements will provide high accessibility.

B. Intensified code enforcement programs should be applied to improve the general quality of those areas with deficient housing. Both public and private initiative conservation programs should be encouraged, particularly where aging of the housing stock indicates that such actions could prevent further deterioration.

C. The Department of Urban Renewal is currently engaged in the study of a 30-acre area in Austin. This predominantly residential area contains 555 housing units. It is expected that 5 to 10 acres will be defined as an urban renewal project. Such an area would be redeveloped with moderately priced, privately built low-rise residential structures and related uses.

D. Recreation space in the Far West Development Area must be increased to provide a minimum of two acres per 1,000 people. Increased emphasis should be placed on the quality of park design, equipment, maintenance, and programs. Whenever possible, the new park land should be located adjacent to schools which have a deficiency in play space.

E. There is a major opportunity for recreational development in the Far West Development Area. The seventy-acre claypit at Narragansett and Fullerton Avenues could be developed as a regional park. Taking advantage of its existing sloping topography, such a park could be used for hiking and picnics in the summer and tobogganing and sledding in the winter.

F. The maintenance, modernization and enlargement of schools and libraries and the addition of

needed playground space are important in meeting contemporary community needs. Education programs that contribute to the quality of life goals of the *Comprehensive Plan* through combatting racial and social isolation will be most important.

G. Business strips line many of the major streets in the Development Area. Many of these commercial areas are becoming obsolete with increasing vacancy rates, poor maintenance, and parking and traffic problems. A system of shopping centers meeting modern standards is proposed to consolidate and strengthen existing businesses, attract new firms, and improve service to the people of the Development Area.


H. Mile and half-mile streets are to be upgraded to primary and secondary thoroughfare standards according to the *Comprehensive Plan*. These measures will help to eliminate through traffic from local and residential streets. Commercial and residential improvements will also be related to necessary street widenings.

I. The Crosstown Expressway will add a new dimension to the development potential of the area. Industrial concentrations, and therefore job opportunities will be made more accessible, and the inclusion of rapid transit service will further enhance those employment opportunities. The development of major activity centers is recommended for the area of the Crosstown-Eisenhower intersection, and a great amount of improvement activity will be linked to opportunities identified along the Crosstown right-of-way.

J. Industrial corridors in the Far West Development Area can be improved by the gradual phasing out of small scattered uses to provide space for industrial expansion and parking. Opportunities exist for development of planned industrial districts.

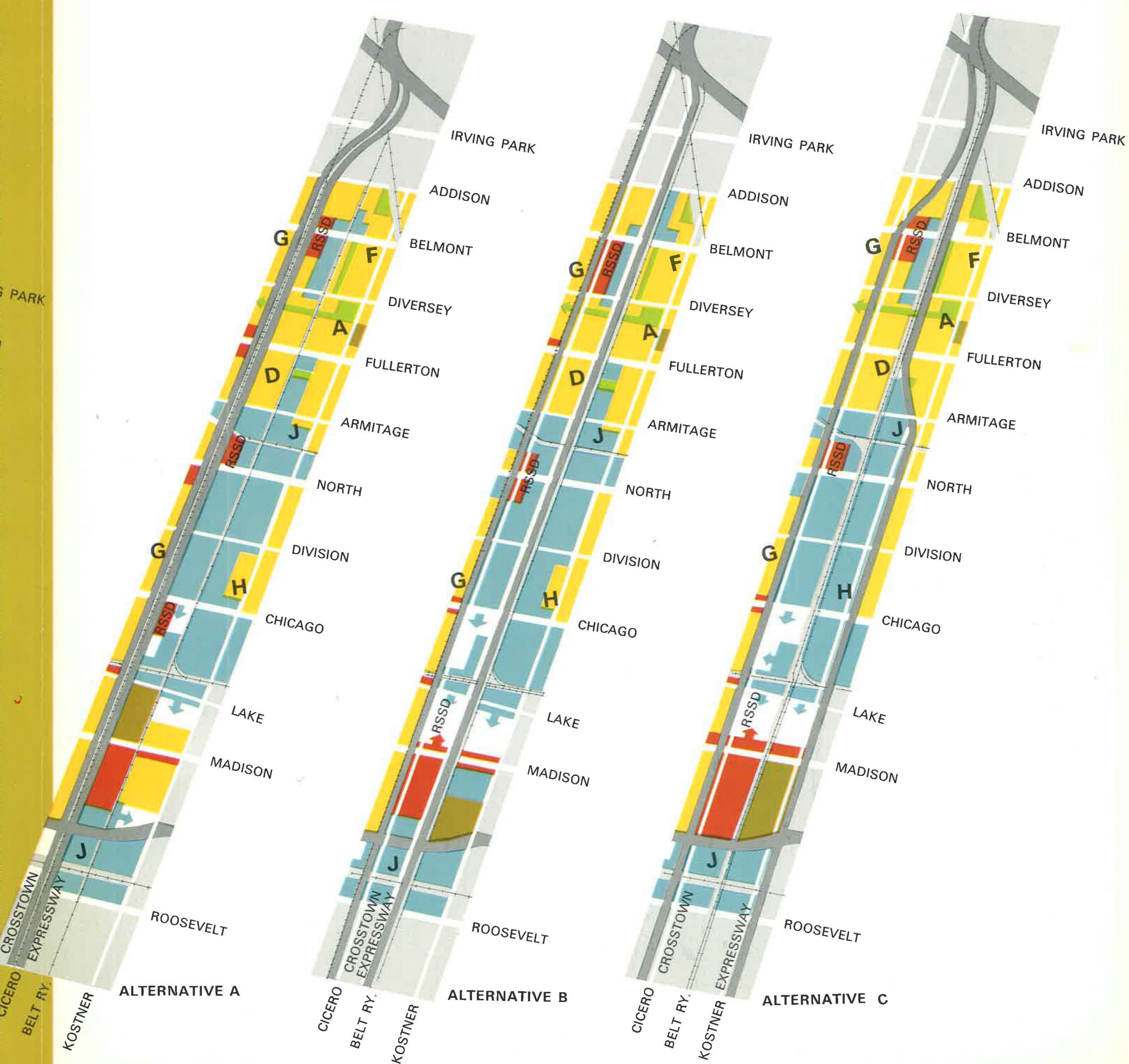
The continuing modernization of the physical plant that supports community services is illustrated in the Capital Improvements section of this report. In every area of community service—recreation, education, public safety, environmental health, and social services—program improvements that are tailored to meet the needs of people must also continue. In the Far West Development Area such improvements should emphasize stronger supportive services for presently disadvantaged groups.

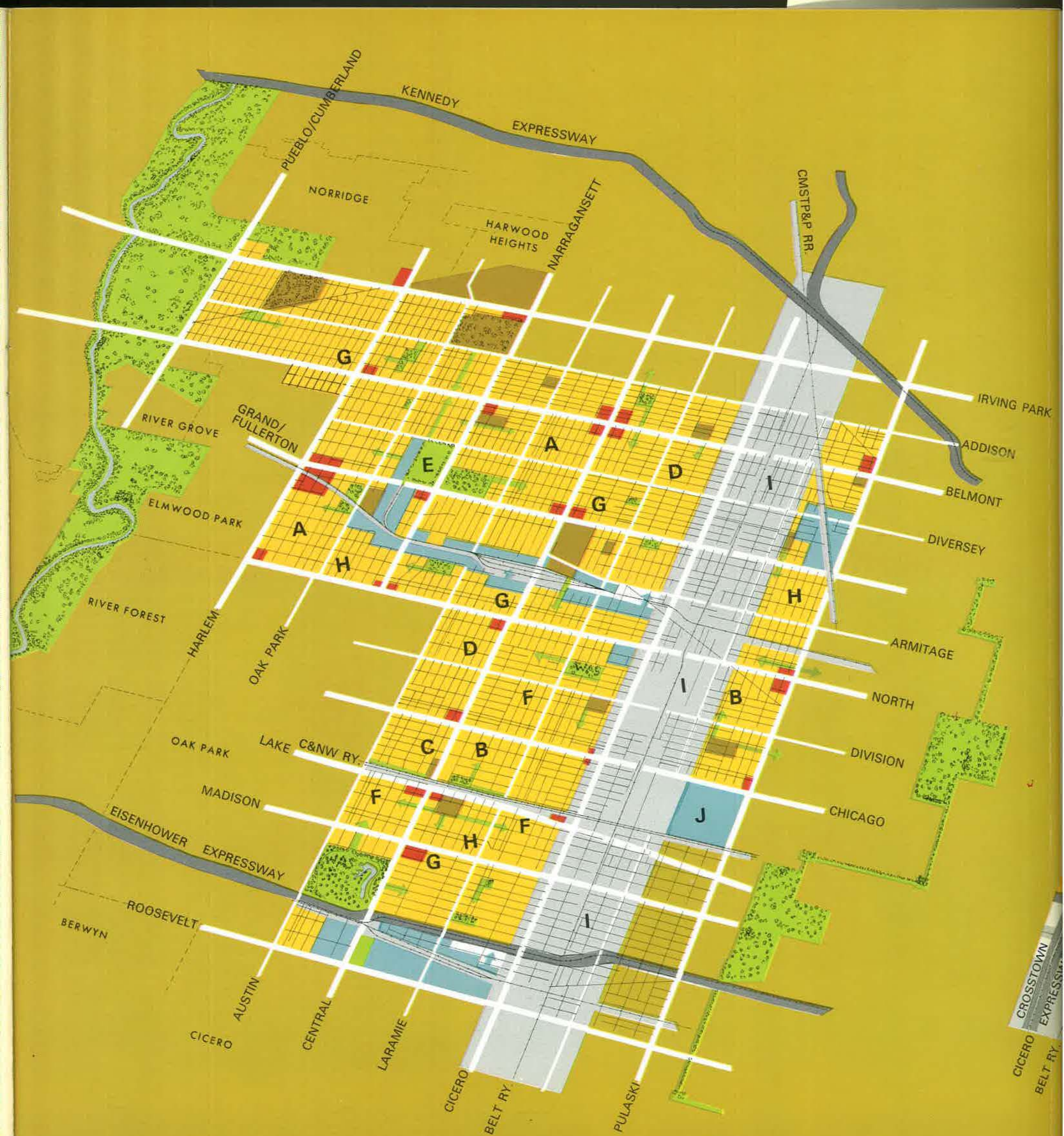
Planning Framework
Far West Development Area

| | |
|--|---|
| Residential |  |
| Business |  |
| Industrial |  |
| Park |  |
| Institutional |  |
| Regional Special Service District | RSSD |
| <hr/> | |
| A Community Maintenance | |
| <hr/> | |
| B Intensified Code Enforcement | |
| <hr/> | |
| C Urban Renewal Study Area | |
| <hr/> | |
| D Open Space and Recreation Needs | |
| <hr/> | |
| E Park Development Opportunity Area | |
| <hr/> | |
| F Improved Community Facilities and Services | |
| <hr/> | |
| G Commercial Consolidation and Renewal | |
| <hr/> | |
| H Major Street Improvements | |
| <hr/> | |
| I Crosstown Expressway Corridor | |
| <hr/> | |
| J Industrial Corridor | |
| <hr/> | |

The diagrams on the overleaf show three possible alternative routes for the Cross-town Expressway. These alternatives illustrate implications for land use and related improvement activities. The expressway will add a new dimension to the development of the area.

PARK





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